

# Capital Gazette shooting victim Wendi Winters: A prolific writer who chronicled her community



Capital Gazette reporter Wendi Winters has been identified as victim of a shooting at the newspaper.



By **Yvonne Wenger**  
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**W**endi Winters spent a dozen years writing her way into the Capital Gazette newsroom.

After a career in fashion and public relations in New York City, the 65-year-old mother of four moved to Maryland 20 years ago and began stringing for the Annapolis news organization. She soon built a reputation as a prolific freelance reporter and well-known community resource.

The Edgewater woman was **one of five Capital Gazette staff members killed** in the shootings Thursday.

Her daughter Winters Geimer said the family was gathering late Thursday.

“My mother was a wonderful woman and a fantastic reporter,” Geimer said. “Her life was a gift to everyone who knew her and the world will not be the same without her. We are grieving and trying to make sure all of us can

be together to celebrate the life of our mother.”

Leslie Hunt, a former Capital Gazette community news editor, said Winters had a talent for connecting with the community and documenting people’s achievements and important local events.

She was “dedicated and loved the work,” Hunt said. “She loves the news business.”

Winters covered all sorts of local news at the Capital Gazette, Hunt said, and wrote columns for the Home of the Week, Teen of the Week and Around Broadneck features. She joined the staff full-time in May 2013 after more than a decade writing articles for hire.

Beyond the newsroom, she identified herself as a “proud Navy mom,” a church youth adviser, a [Red Cross](#) volunteer and a Girl Scout leader who could “make a mean s’more.”

Winters studied fashion design at [Virginia Commonwealth University](#), she wrote in her Facebook profile. She highlighted her experience in fashion retail, marketing, advertising and design.

For seven years, she ran her own boutique company in New York that she described online as specializing in runway shows and other fashion events.

She attended St. Mary’s Academy in Alexandria, Va. She said in an online profile that she learned to report from her professional experience and from her role as a mother “instead of four years at a j-school.”

“She really loved storytelling,” said Kathryn Flynn, a longtime editor at the Capital Gazette. “She loved working with people.”

Winters was a prolific and dependable writer, Flynn said. People in the community came to know her, and pitched her news stories about their lives and accomplishments.

“When we had something that needed to be covered on the weekends, when we only had a few people to call on, you could always call on Wendi,” Flynn said. “She would good-naturedly crank out three or four stories in a weekend.”

Among friends, Winters was known for her detailed Christmas letters. The letters — which she often delivered with a baked treat — would chronicle her previous year in a month-by-month breakdown of her family’s experiences.

“You would be completely updated about every aspect of her life,” Flynn said, and laughed.

Friends said Winters came from a strong, pro-military family.

The military was the topic of one of her articles last month. Winters wrote about local high school graduates heading to service academies. In her words, they were “doing something special: putting on the uniform of a military officer-in-training.”

She compiled information from surveys of graduates in Anne Arundel County.

“The teens shared a common goal — a desire to serve our country as a member of the U.S. military — and often said it was family who inspired them,” Winters wrote. “Nearly all the teens who spoke with The Capital mentioned they’d miss their families, friends, and the teachers and coaches who inspired them to apply to college military service programs.”

Winters also wrote for news services and a weekly newspaper in Manhattan. She organized the annual P.R. Bazaar, at which public relations professionals could meet reporters and learn how to pitch stories.

She said in a LinkedIn profile that she wrote more than 250 articles each year. Her work earned her journalism and public relations awards.

In her last tweet to her 1,073 followers on Sunday, she promoted a Capital Gazette video about a community mural project.

“Spreading beauty one artwork at a time today ...” she wrote.

“That would be Wendi,” Flynn said.

*Baltimore Sun reporter Pamela Wood contributed to this article.*

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